

VZCZCXRO2605
PP RUEHAG RUEHBI RUEHCI RUEHLH RUEHPW RUEHROV
DE RUEHAH #1009 2171040
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 041040Z AUG 08
FM AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1284
INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY 4120
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 1935
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 1800
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL PRIORITY 2369
RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO PRIORITY 1388

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASHGABAT 001009

SIPDIS

STATE FOR SCA/CEN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/04/2018

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [AFIN](#) [TX](#)

SUBJECT: SCO SUMMIT IN DUSHANBE: TURKMENISTAN WILL NOT ATTEND

REF: STATE 82513

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Sylvia Reed Curran for reasons 1.4(B) and (D).

11. (C) Per reftel request, Embassy delivered non-paper to Turkmenistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs on August 1 regarding the August Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit in Dushanbe. Deputy Premier/Foreign Minister of Foreign Affairs Rashid Meredov told the Charge August 4 that President Berdimuhamedov will not attend this year's SCO summit in Dushanbe. According to Meredov, President Berdimuhamedov attended last year's conference as an honored guest of the Kyrgyz president and was once again invited to attend this year as an honored guest. However, Turkmenistan does not even have observer status in the SCO, so it does not believe that its attendance at this year's event is appropriate. Meredov emphasized that Turkmenistan is a neutral country that does not like to get embroiled in political issues. Turkmenistan belongs to the UN and OSCE and thus participates in their events. It also attends CIS meetings, where it is an associate member. Other than that, Turkmenistan prefers to deal with other nations bilaterally.

12. (C) COMMENT: Turkmenistan's attendance at the 2007 Bishkek summit was unusual, and Meredov's explanation is fully consistent with Turkmenistan's neutral status. If Turkmenistan also senses a battle brewing on Manas airbase or on Iran's membership in SCO, it may also be seeking to stay out of the vicinity, unless it or its president receive pressure to support one side over another. END COMMENT.
CURRAN